

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1 through 3 and 7 through 20 were previously canceled herein, said cancellation being without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 4, 6, 21, and 27 have been amended herein. All of the pending claims 4 through 6 and 21 through 29 are presented below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please enter these claims as amended.

Listing of Claims:

1-3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) A process for ~~preparing~~ reducing the rate of formation of (7 α , 17 α) -17-hydroxy-7-methyl-19-nor-17-pregn-4-en-20-yn-3-oneone impurity in crystals of (7 α , 17 α) -17-hydroxy-7-methyl-19-nor-17-pregn-5(10)-en-20-yn-3-one, said process comprising:

aging crystals of ~~(7 α , 17 α)~~ (7 α , 17 α) -17-hydroxy-7-methyl-19-nor-17-pregn-5(10)-en-20-yn-3-one in the presence of water for a period of time of at least 24 hours.

5. (Previously presented) The process of claim 4 wherein the period of time lasts 3-6 days.

6. (Currently amended) The process of claim 4, wherein the crystals are formed in the last step of a synthesis comprising the steps of:

a. reacting ~~(7 α , 17 α)~~ (7 α , 17 α) -3, 3-dimethoxy-17-hydroxy-7-methyl-19-norpregn-5 (10) en-20-yn-3-one in an organic solvent with a weak acidic aqueous solution,

b. pouring out the solution in water which is slightly alkaline, and

c. washing the crystals with water which is slightly alkaline.

7-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) The process of claim 4, wherein the process is carried out by washing crystals of ~~tibolone~~
(7 α , 17 α)-17-hydroxy-7-methyl-19-nor-17-pregn-5(10)-en-20-yn-3-one with water, and drying the ~~tibolone~~
(7 α , 17 α)-17-hydroxy-7-methyl-19-nor-17-pregn-5(10)-en-20-yn-3-one after at least 24 hours of the washing, wherein the ~~tibolone~~
(7 α , 17 α)-17-hydroxy-7-methyl-19-nor-17-pregn-5(10)-en-20-yn-3-one contains less than 0.5% by weight relative to ~~tibolone~~
(7 α , 17 α)-17-hydroxy-7-methyl-19-nor-17-pregn-5(10)-en-20-yn-3-one of (7 α , 17 α)-17-hydroxy-7-methyl-19-nor-17-pregn-4-en-20-yn-3-one as an impurity after drying.

22. (Previously presented) The process of claim 4, wherein the water is alkaline.

23. (Previously presented) The process of claim 22, wherein the water is mixed with pyridine.

24. (Previously presented) The process of claim 21, wherein the crystals are obtained by filtration after crystallization.

25. (Previously presented) The process of claim 21, wherein the drying is carried out after at least 3 days.

26. (Previously presented) The process of claim 4, wherein the impurity is less than 0.25% by weight.

27. (Currently amended) The process of claim ~~25~~ 26, wherein the impurity is less than 0.1% by weight.

28. (Previously presented) The process of claim 21, wherein the impurity is less than 0.25% by weight.

29. (Previously presented) The process of claim 25, wherein the impurity is less than 0.1% by weight.